United Nations S/PV.3769

Security Council
Fifty-second Year

Provisional

3769th Meeting
Wednesday, 16 April 1997, 3.30 p.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Monteiro	(Portugal)
Members:	Chile	Mr. Somavía
	China	Mr. Wang Xuexian
	Costa Rica	Mr. Sáenz Biolley
	Egypt	Mr. Elaraby
	France	Mr. Thiebaud
	Guinea-Bissau	Mr. Da Gama
	Japan	Mr. Takasu
	Kenya	Mr. Mahugu
	Poland	Mr. Wrobel
	Republic of Korea	Mr. Choi
	Russian Federation	Mr. Sergeev
	Sweden	Mr. Osvald
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Richmond
	United States of America	Mr. Inderfurth

Agenda

The situation in Angola

Progress report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Angola Verification Mission (UNAVEM III) (S/1997/304)

97-85414 (E)

This record contains the original text of speeches delivered in English and interpretations of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to original speeches only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned, *within one week of the date of publication*, to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-178.

The meeting was called to order at 3.40 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Angola

Progress report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Angola Verification Mission (UNAVEM III) (S/1997/304)

The President: In accordance with the decisions taken at the 3767th meeting, I invite the representative of Angola to take a seat at the Council table; I invite the representatives of Argentina, Brazil, Cameroon, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, the Netherlands, Peru, Qatar, South Africa, Uruguay and Zimbabwe to take the seats reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Van Dunem "Mbinda" (Angola) took a seat at the Council table; Ms. Ramirez (Argentina), Mr. Amorim (Brazil), Mr. Mpay (Cameroon), Mr. Mangoaela (Lesotho), Mr. Rubadiri (Malawi), Mr. Santos (Mozambique), Mr. Biegman (Netherlands), Mr. Guillén (Peru), Mr. Al-Khalifa (Qatar), Mr. Jele (South Africa), Mr. Benítez Sáenz (Uruguay) and Mr. Mapuranga (Zimbabwe) took the seats reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.

The President: I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter from the representative of Botswana, in which he requests to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite that representative to participate in the discussion, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Legwaila (Botswana) took the seat reserved for him at the side of the Council Chamber.

The President: The Security Council will now resume its consideration of the item on its agenda.

Mr. Osvald (Sweden): The Netherlands will speak later in the debate on behalf of the European Union. Sweden, of course, stands fully behind that statement.

In recent weeks, a breakthrough has taken place in the Angolan peace process. The formation of the Government of Unity and National Reconciliation, as well as the installation of the UNITA deputies in the National Assembly, are vital steps towards the fulfilment of the Lusaka Protocol. Sweden also welcomes the agreement reached on the special status of the leader of UNITA as the Leader of the Largest Opposition Party.

A stable political environment is essential for social and economic rehabilitation and long-term reconciliation. Further strengthening the democratic process in Angola is therefore of great significance. An exchange between the Swedish and Angolan Parliaments has been initiated to support this process.

Important political and military elements of the peace accords remain to be fulfilled. In particular, it is imperative that the incorporation of selected UNITA soldiers into the Angolan Armed Forces and the implementation of the demobilization plan be completed without further delay.

The normalization of the State administration throughout the country is another important issue. It will require cooperation on a national, regional and local level. All efforts should be made to complete this process while the formed military units of the United Nations Angola Verification Mission (UNAVEM III) remain in Angola.

The role of the United Nations in promoting and facilitating the Angolan peace process will continue to be vital. United Nations involvement is needed to see the peace process through to its conclusion and to help consolidate the progress which has been achieved. Sweden will vote in favour of the draft resolution before the Security Council today, extending the mandate of UNAVEM III to 30 June 1997. We also support the proposal of the Secretary-General that UNAVEM III be succeeded by an Observer Mission. The transition between UNAVEM III and its successor should be a smooth one, and we therefore fully support the intention of the Secretary-General to begin preparations for the change in the composition and focus of the United Nations presence in Angola.

As we move into this period of transition, the phasing down of UNAVEM III's military units must continue to be adapted to developments on the ground. We must also bear in mind the continued need for the security of all United Nations personnel to be assured.

For its part, Sweden has contributed military observers, civilian police and demining experts to UNAVEM III. Angola also remains one of the major recipients of Swedish assistance in the development, demining and humanitarian fields. Sweden will give a positive response to the consolidated appeal for Angola launched recently by the Secretary-General. We urge other States to do the same. Contributions to the appeal are needed for the successful implementation of the demobilization and reintegration plan.

We must take this opportunity to build on the progress already made and move ahead to create the foundation for durable peace in Angola. Having come so far, the former adversaries should continue on the road to peace and fulfil their remaining commitments under the peace accords. The ultimate responsibility for restoring peace remains with the Angolans themselves. The international community must, however, continue to lend its support to what remains to be accomplished. Sweden stands firm in its long-standing commitment to the peace process in Angola.

In conclusion, allow me to reiterate our gratitude to the Secretary-General, his Special Representative, Maître Blondin Beye, and the three observer States — Portugal, the Russian Federation and the United States — for their efforts to assist the peace process in Angola.

Mr. Sáenz Biolley (Costa Rica) (*interpretation from Spanish*): On behalf of the Government of Costa Rica, I am pleased to welcome the establishment on 11 April 1997 of the Government of Unity and National Reconciliation, which is a milestone in the recent history of Africa and the world. The inauguration of the Government of Unity and National Reconciliation in fulfilment of the Lusaka Protocol is a very important step in the peace process in that country, which has put an end to a long-lasting fratricidal war.

Some years ago, Central America, torn by civil wars that threatened to become internationalized and to devastate the region, decided on its own, and with the support of the international community, to take its destiny into its own hands and forge a just and lasting peace. We therefore understand and fully appreciate the magnitude of the decision taken by the Angolan people to shoulder their own responsibilities with the support and solidarity of the international community. In this connection, My delegation pays tribute to the countries members of the troika and to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Maître Blondin Beye.

It is true that there are still tasks pending, mainly with regard to the incorporation of former UNITA soldiers into the Angolan Armed Forces and the Angolan National Police; desertion by former combatants from selection and demobilization centres; the dismantling of illegal checkpoints; information concerning the weaponry and strength of the security detachment of the UNITA leader; the handing over of UNITA communication equipment; and the situation regarding UNITA radio, among others.

Costa Rica was struck by the statement in the Secretary-General's report on the United Nations Angola Verification Mission (UNAVEM III) that there are

"recent reports of involvement by the Angolan parties in the Zairian conflict." *(S/1997/304, para. 10)*

If this information should prove to be accurate, it would represent a grave risk of instability, not only in Angola but in other parts of Africa. If that is the case, the parties should abstain from any intervention in Zaire.

On the humanitarian front, Costa Rica believes that efforts should be redoubled for the demobilization and social integration of UNITA soldiers, as this is a very important factor for future stability and the establishment of lasting peace in Angola. Moreover, humanitarian assistance to the people of Angola should be maintained, for, as paragraph 22 of the report (S/1997/248) of the Secretary-General indicates, drought has affected the country and damaged the harvest in the coastal region and in the northern provinces, and also because many people displaced by the war have still not been able to return to their places of origin. We hope that the authority of the State and normalcy will be re-established throughout the territory with the advent of the new Government so that immunization programmes, the programme to seek out family members, the demobilization of child soldiers and the continuation of demining programmes, among others, can be carried out without mishap.

Costa Rica believes that the new Government of Angola must secure the greatest well-being for its people through appropriate and prudent economic measures in

order to reduce inflation and slow down the decline in the people's purchasing power, as the Secretary-General indicates in paragraph 29 of his report (S/1997/248). These are some of the problems that can most severely afflict a people and that can erode democracy. This will certainly require a comprehensive and constructive approach by the international community and especially by international financial organizations.

Finally, the Government of Costa Rica urges His Excellency the President of Angola and Mr. Savimbi to meet with a view to taking up matters that they consider relevant to solidifying further the peace process, as a further contribution within their already fruitful cooperative efforts.

I would like to state Costa Rica's agreement with the extension of the UNAVEM III mandate until 30 June 1997, on the understanding that it will then be replaced by a mission to consolidate peace, which we hope will have a major humanitarian component and will also safeguard respect for human rights.

We hope that the draft resolution that is now being adopted will be a further contribution to building the Angolan people's dream of peace.

The President: The next speaker is the representative of Malawi. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Rubadiri (Malawi): We would like to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of April. We also congratulate your predecessor, the Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Poland, who presided over Council matters last month.

We welcome the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Angola Verification Mission (UNAVEM III) contained in document S/1997/304 of 14 April 1997. Most significantly, we rejoice with the international community at the most wonderful news that has come from Angola, that beautiful country full of people whose resilience amid pain and suffering has touched many of our hearts.

We are informed that the ceremony that ushered in the Government of Unity and National Reconciliation on 11 April 1997 was solemn and moving. Many of our leaders were present at the ceremony, including Malawi's own President. They witnessed the symbolic renewal by the Angolan Government and UNITA of a covenant not to allow, yet again, the people of Angola to languish in misery and despair. The international community now expects the two sides to keep their solemn promises and to take greater strides in consolidating peace, tranquillity and reconciliation throughout the whole of Angola, and in that way, also throughout our continent of Africa.

There is no doubt that the developments that have taken place in that part of our region in the past two weeks have been most encouraging and augur well for the future of Angola and the region as a whole. We urge both sides to continue by being magnanimous and by taking the necessary vital steps in the implementation of the remaining and outstanding aspects of the Lusaka Protocol.

As the Secretary-General has rightly observed, much remains to be done. Fortunately, the essential components are attainable. All that is required is the necessary will, particularly on the part of UNITA. It is imperative that all the military and police aspects of the process be addressed resolutely. We enjoin the Joint Commission to continue playing the positive role it has assumed, especially on the question of the incorporation of UNITA soldiers into the Angolan Armed Forces and the Angolan National Police. The other aspects of the question commented upon in paragraph 19 of the Secretary-General's report also require urgent attention. But perhaps most important is a meeting between President Dos Santos and Mr. Savimbi, which would definitely add fresh impetus towards a firm and final solution, building confidence, trust and honourable commitment to the building of a new nation on our continent. My delegation strongly supports the holding of such a meeting as soon as possible.

The situation in Angola has now reached its most critical and delicate stage. It is important that we should all harness our efforts to ensure that nothing goes wrong again. The international community must continue to play an important part in ensuring that Angola returns to full normalcy. We therefore support the proposal of the Secretary-General contained in paragraph 20 of his report. We also support his previous calls for financial and other assistance to Angola. We specifically invite the international community to fulfil the pledges made at the 1995 Brussels Round Table Conference.

We wish to conclude by once again paying tribute to the Secretary-General, to Mr. Alioune Blondin Beye, his Special Representative, to UNAVEM III personnel and

to all those who have lost their lives in this sad and tragic story, the brave that have worked tirelessly in the search for peace in Angola. The events of the last two weeks show what dedication and perseverance can do to fulfil our prayers for love and peace in Angola. It is our prayer that the renewal of the mandate of UNAVEM III and its eventual transition will finally help to consolidate the gains already made.

As an African, from an African country and from the southern region of Africa, I believe that the rebirth of Angola will strengthen the new growth and the new hope that our countries — which have for a large part of this century suffered through the problems of building up new democracies — are slowly beginning to show for democracy and human rights observers.

The President: I thank the representative of Malawi for the kind words he addressed to me.

The next speaker is the representative of Brazil. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Amorim (Brazil): It is with great pleasure that I congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of April. Your competent guidance, which has already assisted the Security Council in discharging its responsibilities effectively during the first half of your tenure, will undoubtedly have a favourable impact on the consideration of the item before us today, to which both our countries ascribe such great importance. Brazil is particularly satisfied to see you, the Permanent Representative of Portugal, presiding over the Security Council when the prospects for lasting peace in Angola are so encouraging. The symbolism of this circumstance will not go unnoticed. I would like also to express our appreciation to your predecessor, Ambassador Zbigniew Wlosowicz, for his leadership in presiding over the Council during the month of March.

I wish to pay a special tribute to the Secretary-General for his timely visit to Angola, which has had a very positive impact on the peace process. The efforts of his Special Representative, Maitre Blondin Beye, continue to be essential for the successful conclusion of the process. Likewise, the endeavours of the troika of observer States deserve our recognition.

The Council has met during recent months in a sombre mood of unease and apprehension over the situation in Angola. Last Friday, however, a historic event of momentous significance was witnessed by the Angolan people in Luanda. After more than 30 years of devastating war, a Government of Unity and National Reconciliation was sworn in. While the frequent setbacks in Angola do not allow us to welcome the latest developments without a degree of caution, the establishment of the new Government should indeed be hailed as a milestone. As a single united Government of Angola takes up the daunting task of providing all Angolans with the political stability and economic development which they have so long awaited, it is our sincerest hope that a successful transition to democratic pluralism will replace, once and for all, the violence and mistrust which have historically marked relations between the Government and UNITA.

The Secretary-General's recent trip to Angola was instrumental in keeping the process moving in the right direction. His contacts with President José Eduardo dos Santos and Mr. Jonas Savimbi contributed to bringing the Government and UNITA closer together, thus providing an added incentive for discussions on a programme of Government. With the approval by the Angolan National Assembly of a draft law, previously agreed upon between the Government and UNITA, the status of Mr. Jonas Savimbi was finally settled, and the last obstacles to the establishment of a Government of Unity and National Reconciliation were overcome.

We took pride in the fact that during his stay in Angola the Secretary-General visited the Brazilian battalion headquarters in Cuito. As in the past, and now more than ever, Brazil remains ready to cooperate with all Angolans in the construction of a brighter future.

We agree with the Secretary-General when he states in his report that much remains to be done. The extension of the administration of the Government to all areas of the country, the demobilization of UNITA personnel, the completion of the formation of the unified armed forces and the national police are still challenges to be dealt with. In his report, the Secretary-General proposed the renewal of the mandate of the United Nations Angola Verification Mission (UNAVEM III) until 30 June 1997 and its replacement as of 1 July by an observer mission. We welcome this suggestion in the firm expectation that the political scenario in Angola will continue to improve. The international community must persevere in showing its readiness to help Angolans. The arguments in favour of the replacement of UNAVEM III by an observer

mission are indeed persuasive in the light of present trends.

Prosperity and national reconciliation in Angola are now at hand. Brazil wishes to renew the expression of its fraternal solidarity to the Angolan people as we contemplate the promise of a new era of peace.

The President: I thank the representative of Brazil for the very warm words he addressed to me.

The next speaker is the representative of South Africa. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Bergh (South Africa): My delegation, Sir, joins previous speakers in congratulating you on your assumption of the presidency of the Council for this month. Your well-known skills assure us that the Council's business is in good hands. We also congratulate the representative of Poland for his successful stewardship of the Council's deliberations last month.

We thank the Secretary-General for his lucid and gratifying report on the situation in Angola. We would like to commend him, his Special Representative, Mr. Blondin Beye, and the representatives of the three observer States for their consistent efforts in ensuring that the peace process is kept on track. Indeed, these efforts have now been rewarded by the promulgation of legislation on the status of Mr. Savimbi, the swearing in of UNITA deputies and the inauguration of the Government of Unity and National Reconciliation.

The inauguration of the Government of Unity and National Reconciliation is an event which heralds a new era of peace and stability in Angola. This is an era which the peoples and the Governments of southern Africa see as representing an extension of the process of democratization in our region. We commend the Angolan leaders for this display of statesmanship.

South Africa welcomes the decision of the Joint Commission to dispatch special groups to quartering and demobilization centres to assess the situation and to identify measures that will help accelerate the incorporation of UNITA soldiers into the Angolan Armed Forces and the Angolan National Police. We urge cooperation with the Joint Commission in its endeavour, as the slow pace of the incorporation of UNITA soldiers and their desertion from the demobilization centres remain a cause of concern and warrant urgent attention.

We also hope that both parties will demonstrate zeal when dealing with the dismantling of the remaining illegal command posts and checkpoints and the disarmament of the civilian population. We firmly believe that cooperation based on good faith and mutual trust will facilitate the implementation of all the agreements contained in the Lusaka Protocol.

We wish to underscore once again the urgency of a meeting between President Dos Santos and Mr. Savimbi. This long-awaited meeting will provide an opportune moment for both parties to address the outstanding prickly issues and to chart the way forward.

The optimism generated by the current developments in Angola should not obscure the difficult challenges that lie ahead. Angola will need the continued generous support of the donor community. This support is crucial for the reconstruction and development of the war-ravaged economic infrastructure and for the creation of an environment conducive to social reintegration.

My delegation supports the recommendation of the Secretary- General for the extension of the mandate of the United Nations Angola Verification Mission (UNAVEM III) until 30 June 1997 and for the subsequent establishment on 1 July 1997 of a United Nations observer mission in Angola. The establishment of an observer mission is necessary for the completion of military and other tasks and for the consolidation of the national reconciliation process. We consider that the implementation of this recommendation is essential to ensure that stability and lasting peace manifest themselves in Angola.

The President: I thank the representative of South Africa for the kind words he addressed to me.

The next speaker is the representative of Uruguay. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Benítez Sáenz (Uruguay) (*interpretation from Spanish*): My delegation felt the need to speak in the Security Council on this subject because we consider the peacekeeping process in Angola to be entering a phase that is doubly important: it is important for my country, Uruguay; and it is important for the peace process itself. It is important for Uruguay because, with the recent withdrawal of our troops, we feel that we have reached a new stage in the long course that Uruguay has been following for many years, contributing to peacekeeping

in many regions of the world. The first such mission was in 1935, many years before the existence of the United Nations; since the creation of the Organization, we have participated in 14 missions, contributing approximately 8,000 men.

In the case of Angola, the Uruguayan unit was the first to be deployed in the United Nations Angola Verification Mission (UNAVEM III) area, shortly after the 1994 peace accords that enabled Angola to enjoy the longest period of peace that it has known in the past 30 years. Twenty days ago, the withdrawal of the Uruguayan battalion from Angola was completed, and of the original 800 men on duty just 70 remain in the region.

Together with other troop-contributing countries, we have shouldered our responsibilities, conscious of being a stabilizing factor in the peace process. We are proud of our participation in this force in the service of the United Nations.

As my comments suggest, my country is very pleased to have contributed to yet another mission in the service of world peace. The new experience gained has continued to enhance the professionalism of our armed forces, and we stand ever ready to provide the United Nations with our support, whether in new peacekeeping missions, or by passing on our experience — another means by which Uruguay can contribute to the Organization.

We acknowledge and welcome in particular the contribution of the Secretary-General through his visit to Angola from 22 to 25 March 1997. The results of that visit are reflected in his comments on 11 April and also in his report on the United Nations Angola Verification Mission (UNAVEM III). I should also like to add that Uruguay appreciates the responsible attitude and the sensitivity shown by the Secretary-General, his Special Representative and the Force Commander in carrying out their mandates.

Furthermore, we consider this to be a vital moment for the peace process itself. Despite the optimism shown in the report, the future still holds the challenge of attaining lasting peace in Angola. The extension of State administration to the entire territory is an objective that should be met as quickly as possible. Social reintegration of ex-combatants in Angola is still an issue of concern, and we call for close monitoring of the general process of disarming the population. The slow speed of integration into the armed forces, as well as the latent threat that the Angolan parties might intervene in Zaire, are the most worrying aspects of this issue. In this context, there is a need for greater cooperation on the part of the developed countries so that assistance in demobilization can be guaranteed and funding provided in a timely manner.

In his report, the Secretary-General referred specifically to the need to prepare for the observer mission that will replace UNAVEM III. At the same time, however, we must assume that the United Nations cannot remain in Angola forever. Just as we have completed the withdrawal plan, we must also be aware of our continuing responsibility to strengthen the civilian and humanitarian presence in the area. There is also a need for the transition process to proceed smoothly, so that the problems emerging in certain regions do not tarnish the victory that has already been achieved: that of giving Angola the longest period of peace that it has known in the past three decades.

Uruguay is fully prepared to continue to participate, within its means, in the reconstruction of Angola and is prepared to offer its support for any other undertaking planned for UNAVEM III. In this respect, we can state that we are now in a position to offer additional police observers for deployment on the ground.

The President: The next speaker is the representative of Mozambique. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Dos Santos (Mozambique): My delegation would like to join preceding speakers in extending to you, Sir, our sincere congratulations on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of April. We are particularly happy to see you presiding over the Council's deliberations on the important item before it today. We would also like to pay tribute to your predecessor for the brilliant manner in which he presided over the Council's work last month.

Allow me to express my delegation's sincere appreciation to the Secretary-General for the role he has played in the Angolan peace process, particulary during his last visit to the country. His visit gave a new impetus to the process, and encouraged the reaffirmation of the commitment of both the Angolan Government and UNITA to fulfil the agreements they entered into.

It was with great joy that the people and the Government of Mozambique welcomed, and witnessed, the installation of the Government of Unity and National Reconciliation in Angola after many years of procrastination and seemingly endless suffering for the

Angolan people. The formation of the Government of Unity and National Reconciliation, and the return of UNITA deputies to their seats in the National Assembly, mark an important step towards stability and the normalization of the situation in Angola. The people of Angola are, more than ever before, near to the final resolution of the devastating conflict and to the attainment of lasting peace.

The Angolans can now concentrate their efforts on national reconstruction, economic recovery and promoting the development of their country. We congratulate the Angolans for the courage and the spirit of reconciliation that they have demonstrated.

The establishment of the Government of Unity and National Reconciliation is an important step, but not the end in itself. Much more should be done to implement other aspects of the Lusaka Protocol. There is a need to move expeditiously to normalize State administration throughout the country, to complete the formation of the unified Armed Forces and the National Police and to demobilize the excess UNITA military personnel. The large number of deserters and absentees from the selection and demobilization centres may cause problems and endanger the peace process. Therefore, the continued commitment and determination of the Government of Angola and UNITA are required so as to bring the peace process to a successful conclusion.

The United Nations and the international community at large should remain engaged in supporting the people of Angola in overcoming the challenges they have to face today. My delegation has carefully examined the progress report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Angola Verification Mission (UNAVEM III). We welcome the recommendation of the Secretary-General to the Security Council to approve the extension of the mandate of UNAVEM III until 30 June 1997 and the establishment as from 1 July of the United Nations Observer Mission in Angola (UNOMA). We believe that an Observer Mission will help the people of Angola consolidate the process of national reconciliation with s view to creating conditions conducive to political stability and economic and social recovery.

Once again, we would like to reiterate our appreciation to the all those contributing towards the attainment of an enduring peace in Angola, thus bringing about a conducive environment for development not only in Angola, but in the whole region of southern Africa. We would like to thank particularly the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Blondin Beye, the observer countries and troop-contributing nations.

The President: I thank the representative of Mozambique for his very kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker is the representative of Cameroon. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Mpay (Cameroon)(*interpretation from French*): First of all let me say, Mr. President, how pleased the delegation of Cameroon is to see you presiding over the Security Council at a time when Angola, which has long-standing historical ties to Portugal, has entered a decisive stage in the process of peace, unity and national reconciliation. We are sure that under your presidency, the Council's work will be successful. We also congratulate your predecessor, Ambassador Zbigniew Maria Wlosowicz of Poland, on the excellent work he accomplished as President of the Council last month.

We reiterate to the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Kofi Annan, the appreciation of Cameroon and Africa as a whole for his tireless efforts for peace in the world since he has been at the head of the Organization.

(spoke in English)

I am speaking also in my capacity as representative of the current Chairman of the Organization of African Unity (OAU).

I wish to take this opportunity to express the deep appreciation of the Organization of African Unity for the encouraging report (S/1997/304) of 14 April 1997, submitted to the Council on the United Nations Angola Verification Mission (UNAVEM III).

Recent developments - the approval by the National Assembly of legislation concerning the special status of the President of UNITA, the swearing in of the UNITA deputies and the inauguration of the Government of Unity and National Reconciliation - are historic steps in the direction of peace, stability and national reconciliation. These developments are great because a window of opportunity for peace has been opened for the people of Angola, who have long endured pain, suffering and the ravages of a fratricidal war.

In the light of these new developments in Angola, the OAU congratulates the Angolan Government and UNITA on their vision and determination to enhance the unity and reconciliation of the people of Angola. The OAU also congratulates the United States, Portugal, the Russian Federation and other countries for their steadfastness, commitment and resolve to assist the parties in arriving at this new day in Angola. To the Secretary-General and his Special Representative, Maître Alioune Blondin Beye, the OAU extends its deep appreciation for the relentless efforts they have exerted and continue to exert to bring about lasting peace in that troubled sister country.

The OAU shares the view that as much of the international community welcomes these encouraging developments, there is much more that needs to be done to consolidate and build upon this manifestation of goodwill by UNITA and the Government of Angola. In this regard, therefore, the international community and all who have played some part in the establishment of the Government of Unity and National Reconciliation have a moral and political obligation to stay engaged in the efforts of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General.

The reasons for staying engaged are too obvious to mention. But if there is one reason why we should all stay engaged, it is that an uncontrolled fire in your neighbour's house can reach your house if you do not act in time. In other words, there is an imperative that requires Angola to be secure from the crisis at its borders.

The full implementation of the Lusaka Protocol is the objective the OAU and the international community wish to see achieved. In this regard, we must persevere in the task and encourage the Government of Unity and National Reconciliation to resolve all pending issues. If ever there was a time for the international community to stay engaged in Angola, it is now. The international community owes the people of Angola that much, and the OAU enjoins the Security Council also to be engaged until the objective is achieved.

The President: I thank the representative of Cameroon for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker is the representative of Argentina. I invite her to take a seat at the Council table and to make her statement.

Ms. Ramírez (Argentina)(*interpretation from Spanish*): As is stated by the Secretary-General in his recent report, the events of the past two weeks in Angola have been very encouraging. The inauguration of the Government of Unity and National Reconciliation on 11 April 1997 — with the appointment of four Ministers and seven Vice-Ministers from UNITA, the swearing in of 67 of the 70 UNITA deputies in the National Assembly and that body's adoption of the law on the special status of Mr. Jonas Savimbi — allows us to say with deep satisfaction that after more than 20 years, this fratricidal struggle seems finally to have been left behind and there is a sincere commitment to the peace process.

At this crucial time, the people of Angola deserve all our admiration for having, maintained, despite adversity, their faith in a shared goal of peace, liberty, justice and prosperity, and for having stoically endured the sufferings of war. Such faith demands the support of the international community.

A stable and lasting peace inevitably calls for mutual sacrifice and concessions. We therefore appeal once again to both parties to the Angolan conflict not to miss this new and invaluable opportunity, but to work together on the task of consolidating peace by resolving all the issues under the Lusaka Protocol left pending. In this connection, it is essential that the process of unification of the Armed Forces and the National Police be completed, as well as the demobilization of surplus UNITA military personnel. A new and definitive impetus must be given to the task of social reintegration of the ex-combatants, and State administration must be normalized throughout the country.

In this context, we hope that the meeting between President Dos Santos and Mr. Jonas Savimbi will take place as soon as possible. They cannot avoid this responsibility to the people of Angola.

Our commitment to international peace and security, as well as our friendship for the people of Angola, led to our participation in UNAVEM III. We believe that UNAVEM III has played and will continue to play an important role in the peace process. We therefore support the Secretary-General's recommendation, in his report of 14 April 1997, regarding the need to extend the mandate of UNAVEM III to 30 June 1997.

We would also express our appreciation for the tireless efforts of the United States, the Russian Federation and Portugal to find a peaceful solution to the dispute, as well as for those of the Secretary-General's Special Representative, Mr. Blondin Beye of the Republic of Mali. We must make special mention of the Secretary-

General's decision to visit Angola and hold a frank, direct and substantive dialogue with President Dos Santos and Mr. Savimbi.

Finally, Mr. President, on behalf of the delegation of Argentina, I wish to express our deep and sincere appreciation for your initiative in encouraging the holding of formal meetings of the Security Council, which are an essential contribution to the transparency of its work and the legitimacy of its decisions.

The President: I thank the representative of Argentina for her kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker is the representative of Lesotho. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Mangoaela (Lesotho): I wish to begin by congratulating you, Sir, on behalf of my Government, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of April. I also wish to pay tribute to your predecessor for his very successful work during the course of the last month.

My delegation warmly welcomes the Secretary General's positive report on Angola and reiterates its appreciation for the efforts of the Special Representative, Maître Blondin Beye. The commitment to and support of both Secretary-General Kofi Annan and Mr. Beye for the peace process in Angola continue to be important catalysts for a new era of peace and economic and social progress in Angola.

When we last addressed this body in February, a goal was set for all parties to show more commitment to the peace process. Our hopes were focused on the swearing in of UNITA deputies and the formation of a Government of Unity and National Reconciliation as a next step in a schedule of goals and timetables voluntarily agreed upon by the Government of Angola and UNITA. While we were encouraged by some of the steps which both parties had taken to restore the momentum for the peace process, we remained pessimistic and expressed our concerns over the delays in implementing the outstanding political and military issues.

Today, we are happy that, more than ever before, the prospects for lasting peace in Angola have been significantly advanced: the approval by the National Assembly of the legislation concerning the special status of the UNITA leader, Mr. Savimbi, the swearing in of UNITA deputies in the National Assembly and the inauguration of the Government of Unity and National Reconciliation on 11 April 1997 are commendable efforts and decisive steps towards the completion and full implementation of other aspects of the Lusaka Protocol.

We commend all the parties for showing commitment and rededicating themselves to peace, stability and prosperity in Angola. Most of all, we congratulate the women and men of Angola for their sacrifices and efforts. Despite various obstacles that threatened the fragile peace process, they never faltered in their quest for peaceful national reconciliation. We share the Secretary-General's hope that tangible and rapid progress can now be made towards completing the implementation of the other aspects of the Lusaka Protocol in the spirit of cooperation and mutual accommodation which both parties have so far demonstrated. We thus remain confident that the Angolan peace process will never again be threatened by procrastination on the part of either party.

Given that the major goal of establishing a Government of Unity and National Reconciliation has now been achieved, the international community should sustain its support for the people of Angola. At this decisive point, an extension of the mandate of UNAVEM III up to 30 June 1997 is necessary to ensure that Angola establishes one army and one police force for one united Angola. My delegation thus welcomes the extension of the mandate of UNAVEM III and supports the transitional arrangements recommended by the Secretary-General in his report contained in document S/1997/304.

The Secretary-General's report indicates that there is still much work that needs to be done before lasting peace and reconciliation can be achieved in Angola. The challenges of integrating UNITA soldiers into the national army and police force and of demobilizing excess personnel still remain to be resolved, as does the thorny issue of deserters and absentees. In the light of the positive developments so far, we urge all the parties to continue to display the political will to build on their goodwill and understanding by cooperating in the remaining tasks leading to a free Angola. The greatest challenge for the newly established Government of Unity and National Reconciliation is to pave the way for free and fair elections by creating the necessary political conditions and infrastructure for free and democratic choice. The continued presence of the international community in Angola in the form of an Observer Mission

after the expiration of the UNAVEM III mandate is thus necessary for post-conflict peace-building purposes.

In conclusion, my delegation expresses its gratitude to the international donor community and the countries of the troika for their valuable support and efforts in assisting the people of Angola as they strive to attain a long-awaited and well-deserved peace.

The President: I thank the representative of Lesotho for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker is the representative of the Netherlands. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Biegman (Netherlands): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. The following associated countries have aligned themselves with this statement: Bulgaria, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, the Slovak Republic and Slovenia. Iceland and Norway have also aligned themselves with this statement.

The European Union welcomes the inauguration of the Government of Unity and National Reconciliation on 11 April, which marks one of the most important steps in the peace process initiated at Lisbon in 1991 and renewed at Lusaka in 1994, and which sets Angola on the promising path of development for the benefit of all Angolans. We would like to congratulate the Angolan people and express our best wishes to the new Angolan Government for the further consolidation of the peace process. Moreover, we should like to pay tribute to the Secretary-General, whose most timely visit to Angola was a major factor in achieving this breakthrough, as well as to his Special Representative, Maître Blondin Beye, and the three observer countries for the indispensable role they have played in the formation of the new Government.

The Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA), UNITA and the other parties can and must now walk the last mile to the full implementation of the Lusaka accords and national reconciliation together. In view of the extremely difficult road which led to the Government of Unity and National Reconciliation, continued confidence-building between its components will be necessary. In this context, an early meeting between President Dos Santos and Mr. Savimbi seems to be an important step. It is also to be borne in mind that much remains to be done in order to achieve the same unity of administration at the provincial and national levels as has been achieved at the central level.

With the establishment of the new Government, the way is now open for the full completion of important tasks such as the normalization of the State administration throughout the national territory and policy discussions with the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. Rapid progress is called for in the incorporation of UNITA troops into the Angolan army and the National Police, as well as in the area of demobilization. We welcome the launching of the rapid demobilization programme last Saturday. The 27,000 soldiers, who left the quartering areas as deserters and absentees, should return as soon as possible and be demobilized. The outstanding political tasks must now also be completed.

The European Union and its member States have provided significant political, financial, material and personnel support for demining activities in Angola. We hope that the planned transfer of the responsibility for support of the national mine- clearance programme from the United Nations Angola Verification Mission (UNAVEM III) to the United Nations Development Programme will take place soon in order to secure the future of the programme. We therefore look forward to the early signing of the project document concerning the development of a national mine-clearance capacity in Angola.

We have taken note of the Secretary-General's intention to complete the phased drawdown of UNAVEM's military units by the end of August of this year. At the same time, we feel that the United Nations still has a role to play in support of the peace process. Accordingly, we concur with the Secretary-General's recommendation to extend the mandate of UNAVEM III until 30 June 1997, on the understanding that the operation would gradually proceed with the transition towards a United Nations observer mission in Angola to be formally established on 1 July 1997. In addition to the completion of the remaining military tasks, the observer mission would focus on political, police and human rights aspects, as well as on humanitarian and public information programmes aimed at consolidating the national reconciliation process. We attach particular importance to the deployment of human rights officers and of police observers, who would monitor compliance with the peace accords, including freedom of movement throughout the country.

Once again, we would like to commend the staff of UNAVEM III, United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations, who perform their work in often trying conditions. It is important that their safety continue to be assured both at present and during any future United Nations presence in Angola.

During his visit to Angola, the Secretary-General launched the United Nations consolidated appeal for 1997, which includes humanitarian needs as well as a basis for rehabilitation and reconstruction. The new Government can rest assured that its efforts in the reconstruction of a reconciled Angola and in the framework of the peace process will meet with a willingness on the part of the European Union to cooperate actively. With international assistance, a successful consolidation of the peace process and good governance can certainly be achieved.

The President: The next speaker is the representative of Zimbabwe. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Mapuranga (Zimbabwe): It is with immense delight and rekindled hope that my delegation welcomes the inauguration of the Government of Unity and National Reconciliation in Angola. I cannot but echo most resoundingly the Secretary-General's observation that

> "Never before has the country been so close to the final resolution of its devastating conflict and to the attainment of lasting peace". *(S/1997/304, para. 17)*

The dramatic events of the past two weeks clearly demonstrate that the people of Angola hold their destiny in their own hands. Crucial steps which had remained glued to the drawing boards and measures which had overstayed their time on the list of things to do have, all of a sudden, made a dramatic transformation and have been inscribed on the list of achievements, real achievements. The regularization of Mr. Savimbi's status, the swearing in of UNITA deputies and the historic inauguration of the Government of Unity and National Reconciliation have given the people of Angola a firm grip on the reins of peace, and raised our hopes that a new day is dawning in that country — and all this in spite of the litany of past disappointments and failed peace efforts.

Zimbabwe most heartily congratulates the people of Angola on their remarkable steps forward in the peace process. The personal presence of His Excellency the President of Zimbabwe, Robert Gabriel Mugabe, at the inauguration of the Government of Unity and National Reconciliation in Luanda was an eloquent expression of my country's, and indeed the subregion's, unwavering support for the peace process in Angola, and of our abiding goodwill towards the brotherly people of Angola. It is the earnest hope of the people of the region that Angola's new but achievement-studded calendar heralds a new breath of the spirit of cooperation and mutual accommodation which was the hallmark of the Lusaka accords.

In this regard, we call upon the people of Angola to ride upon this tide of success, goodwill and great expectations, and move expeditiously to conclude the political, military and administrative assignments which they have committed themselves to in order to make lasting peace an irreversible reality in their country.

We look forward to more progress, *inter alia* in the normalization of State administration throughout the entire country, the completion of the formation of the united armed forces and the national police, and the demobilization of the remainder of UNITA's military personnel.

As we look forward to the consolidation of peace in Angola, we in southern Africa will continue to put our full weight behind the efforts to promote that process. Through its chairmanship of the Organization of African Unity Ad Hoc Committee on Angola and the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) Organ on Politics, Defence and Security, Zimbabwe will continue to use its good offices to widen the frontiers of peace.

I wish to conclude by stating that we welcome and fully support the Secretary-General's recommendation to extend the mandate of the United Nations Angola Verification Mission (UNAVEM III) to 30 June, as well as to create a follow-up mission in the form of a United Nations observer mission in Angola. It is also of crucial importance that the international community undergird the peace-building efforts that must now commence. These should include the post-war reconstruction of the shattered infrastructure and the resettlement of refugees and internally displaced persons, as well as meeting the daunting challenge of landmine clearance.

We pay tribute to UNAVEM III, to the Secretary-General and his Special Representative, to the troika of observers, to the Organization of African Unity and to the countries of the subregion, for their collective and cumulative contributions helped create the requisite quantum leap in the Angola peace process.

The President: The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Qatar. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Al-Khalifa (Qatar): I would like to take this opportunity to thank you, Sir, for convening and presiding over this meeting. At the same time, I would like to take this opportunity to convey through you my thanks to your predecessor, our colleague from Poland.

I have the honour and the pleasure to welcome the formation of the new Government of Unity and National Reconciliation in Angola on behalf of the Asian Group and my country. This is truly an important juncture in African history. After decades of civil strife, the people of Angola have come together to establish peace and stability in their country. This peace agreement is a source of pride not only for the African continent, but also for the world as a whole. We hope that it will have far-reaching effects on conflict situations around the world.

In this regard, we call upon the Angolan people to sustain what has been achieved politically and to consolidate it on the basis of peace-building and economic development. To realize this objective, we support the Secretary-General's conviction that the international community should remain engaged in Angola until the full implementation of the Lusaka Protocol is achieved.

The success story in Angola would not have been possible without the commitment and the generous contributions of the community of nations. Today we have a new spirit in the difficult task of peace-making and peacekeeping. I am sure that the Secretary-General and his staff spared no effort to achieve this historic accord. For this they deserve our appreciation and continued support until the United Nations fulfils its goals of maintaining peace and security throughout the world, as laid down in the Charter of the United Nations.

The President: I thank the representative of Qatar for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Peru. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Guillén (Peru) (*interpretation from Spanish*): I would like to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of April. Allow me also to convey my congratulations to your predecessor, the Permanent Representative of Poland, Ambassador Wlosowicz.

I am pleased to speak on behalf of the delegation of Peru. I am also expressing the feelings of Latin American and Caribbean countries, which are taking an interest in those meetings on the situation in Angola. It is our wish in particular to welcome the recent inauguration of the Government of Unity and National Reconciliation of Angola. Over these years we have seen the difficult path that the people of Angola have had to travel in order to reach this important moment. The inauguration of the Government of Unity and National Reconciliation is a fundamental step towards the promise of consolidating peace and democracy to replace the mistrust and violence that have so sorely affected the people of Angola.

We welcome the step taken last March in Lusaka by the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan. This gave critical impetus to achieving the final agreement between the Angolan parties. The efforts made by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Maître Alioune Blondin Beye, and by all mediating countries have also been notable. All of this has been invaluable to reaching this event.

States Members of the United Nations have been looking forward to this moment because there have been setbacks which have jeopardized the entire process ever since the "Acordos de Paz" were signed in 1991 and the Lusaka Protocol in 1994. The transitional phase about to begin will be difficult, complex and sensitive. It will be vital during this phase to have the firm support and commitment of the parties in carrying out their responsibilities in keeping with the agreements they have entered into.

There is therefore a special responsibility on the parties with regard to the United Nations. The peace, security and development of the Angolan people, who have suffered so much, are rights that we cannot ignore. In this connection, we welcome the initiative of the Secretary-General to convert the United Nations Angola Verification Mission (UNAVEM III) at the end of its mandate into a United Nations observer mission. We believe that what has been attained with such great effort could be lost without this.

Angola urgently requires a process of rehabilitation and reconstruction. Basic needs must be met. The development and training of human resources are particularly essential. We believe that this is a typical

case of the reconstruction of a country. This can only be achieved through the organic, carefully planned efforts and well-integrated efforts of the international community — as various Members of the United Nations and the Secretariat have proposed — in order to consolidate peace and internal security.

We hope that peace in Angola will move the parties involved in conflicts in other parts of Africa to act, because the peoples of this continent are entitled to the right to life and security that we all believe in as individuals and as Members of the United Nations.

The President: I thank the representative of Peru for the kind words he addressed to me. The next speaker is the representative of Botswana. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Legwaila (Botswana): Botswana warmly welcomes the recent inauguration of the Government of Unity and National Reconciliation in Angola. It is our fervent hope that this momentous political development will set Angola on the road to irreversible peace and stability. The people of Angola have suffered; they have bled and died needlessly for far too long. It is time this unhappy past was banished to the museum of history.

The inauguration marked a new era of hope for a peaceful Angola and a peaceful southern Africa. Peace in Angola is our peace; it is peace for all the nations of southern Africa. The presence of the regional leaders, including my own Head of State, at the inauguration ceremony bears testimony to the regional dimension of the Angolan peace process. Like a human body, the region of southern Africa cannot function or act as one when a part of it is at war with itself.

While the inauguration of the Government of Unity and National Reconciliation was a ceremonial event worth celebrating with due pomp, we should lose sight neither of the fact that the Lusaka Protocol has not yet been completely implemented nor of the fact that it will take a long time to heal the wounds of war and mutual suspicion among Angolans. The absence of the UNITA leader, leader of the largest opposition party, Mr. Jonas Savimbi, from the inauguration ceremony left too much to be desired vis-à-vis the future of the new Government of Angola. Mr. Savimbi cited personal safety as a reason for his absence from the ceremony. Yet there were Heads of State — 11 of them — whose security was assured by the Angolan authorities, and everything went without incident. It can only be deduced that the UNITA leader is suspicious of a Government of which he is supposedly now an integral part. It is our hope that Mr. Savimbi will find it an act of statesmanship and patriotism to relocate to Luanda to take an active part in the arduous task of national reconciliation and reconstruction. The leader of the opposition always has the seat of government as his base, and his real intentions should not be the subject of guesswork.

It is an anomaly that the Government of Unity and National Reconciliation is not operational throughout the national territory of Angola. This must be redressed without delay. Equally, we call on the Government to speedily incorporate and integrate UNITA soldiers into the Angolan Armed Forces, as well as to complete the demobilization of excess combatants. And we fully support the call contained in the present draft resolution for a meeting between the President of Angola and the leader of UNITA to iron out these problems.

God has endowed Angola with abundant natural resources for its people to share and by which they can prosper together. The remaining political and military problems should not be allowed to stand in the way of the Angolan people's enjoyment of their natural heritage in peace and harmony.

The international community has stood by the people of Angola in their hour of darkest need. We are happy that they are not about to be abandoned. The provision in the present draft resolution for a follow-on United Nations presence after the withdrawal of UNAVEM III is a clear indication that the international community will continue to be ready to help the Angolans to live with one another as one nation bound by a common destiny. This will take some time, as I have already indicated, but the onus rests upon the people of Angola themselves to abandon mistrust and mutual suspicion lest the international community's resolve to help them weakens and withers away before total peace is achieved in that country. Angola is one of the most beautiful countries of southern Africa, and we cannot afford to have it destroyed with reckless abandon.

Mr. Somavía (Chile) (*interpretation from Spanish*): The inauguration of the Government of Unity and National Reconciliation in Angola is an historic milestone that the Government of Chile welcomes, together with the entire international community.

We must recognize that on those occasions when the parties did not take the necessary steps called for by the

international community, we often felt that frustration was dominating over good wishes. But finally expectations have been met, and we would like to congratulate all Angolans on this major step. They are the winners. It is the people of Angola who are triumphant, and this should now give them the strength needed to embark on a new phase in their history — that of development, progress and reconciliation.

I would like to take this opportunity to address the representative of Angola, who is here in the Council Chamber, and to tell him that we congratulate him on his new status as representative of the new Government of Unity and National Reconciliation of Angola. From now on, through the will of the parties, he and his delegation are representing at the United Nations all of the people of Angola. We wish him every success in this new phase.

The Secretary-General has noted that it will take a long time to do the great deal that remains to be done in Angola, starting with the completion of pending issues of the Lusaka Protocol. We should not let the success of the past few weeks blind us to the difficulties which still exist.

We believe that it is essential that the new Government of Angola, headed by President Dos Santos, should strengthen its internal ties. National reconciliation — and many countries know through experience the difficulties and complexities of this — is the priority task and perhaps the most crucial in the long run. This will be the main source of stability in the future, but it is also the most difficult. It takes time to bury hatred; it takes time to forgive others; it takes time to acknowledge one's own mistakes.

That is why close cooperation between President Dos Santos and Mr. Savimbi seems so indispensable. This is the time to build everlasting bonds of mutual trust between them and between their teams. The image of unity, and actual unity, is the best gift that both can give to their people. Let peace begin with peace in the hearts of the leaders. For this to happen Mr. Savimbi would personally have to join in the political dialogue at the highest level.

The future lies in the hands of the people of Angola. However, the Angolan people, their Government of Unity and National Reconciliation and the many friends of Angola must remain vigilant, and ensure that the international community does not leave them alone on the new path that they are treading. The United Nations Angola Verification Mission (UNAVEM III) is concluding one phase, but the United Nations must continue to support the consolidation of the peace process.

For all these reasons, my delegation will support the draft resolution through which the Security Council will extend the mandate of UNAVEM III for the last time, and will express its intention to consider the continuation of the United Nations presence in Angola following the withdrawal of UNAVEM III by sending an observer mission.

With regard to Angola's present situation, we should like to note that the delegation of Chile has on numerous occasions reiterated its concern over what happens after peacekeeping operations come to an end — precisely the time at which the great challenges of consolidating peace and starting on the road to reconstruction, economic and social development and reconciliation arise.

We believe that this is an excellent opportunity to try to ensure that the United Nations observer mission in Angola proposed by the Secretary-General will cooperate with the Government of Unity and National Reconciliation in these matters, so as to ensure a smooth and safe transition.

However, if all goes well in the near future, Angola will cease to be an item on the agenda of the Security Council, although it will not cease to be in our minds or lose the support of the United Nations system. However, there is always a danger: in other cases we have seen how, once a crisis is over, agreements have been reached and peace restored, international political interest in the next phase — that of development and national reconciliation — quickly falls off. It is as if the Security Council were saying, "Goodbye and good luck. All the best". Of course, a general appeal is made to international community, and, in particular, consolidated humanitarian appeals are made in support of the country. But there is no regular follow-up of developments in the country that was the subject of such great political attention in the Security Council — in this Chamber. Instead, ad hoc groups are set up to follow the situation in the country.

I believe that we need to think about this matter. Perhaps the Economic and Social Council could have the task of taking on countries emerging from a crisis, once they are off the Security Council's agenda, accompanying them as they go through their new phase, coordinating in an appropriate manner the support of the international

community and, above all, keeping political interest in the issues alive.

We fully support the idea that the activities of the future United Nations observer mission in Angola should focus mainly on pending military issues, political matters, the police, human rights, humanitarian programmes and support for the process of national reconciliation. However, it is also important to include the objectives of economic and social development, to which the United Nations could contribute in this delicate process.

Finally, allow me to thank all the men and women who have participated in UNAVEM for the very valuable work that they have done in support of peace in Angola. We should like to thank the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan; his predecessor, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali; and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Alioune Blondin Beye; as well as the Governments of Portugal, the United States and the Russian Federation for their mediation efforts; the entire United Nations system; the humanitarian agencies on the ground; and, in particular, the long-suffering people of Angola, who are now seeing a new dawn.

The President: I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of Portugal.

As the representative of the Netherlands has already done on behalf of the European Union, Portugal welcomes the recent developments in the political situation in Angola. The Government of Unity and National Reconciliation, and the swearing-in ceremony of the UNITA members of Parliament, are paving the way for a successful conclusion of the Angolan peace process.

As the Secretary-General stated in his progress report on the United Nations Angola Verification Mission (UNAVEM III), last week's events could well become a milestone in the history of Angola. The Government of Unity and National Reconciliation is a fundamentally important political confidence-building measure. We look forward to all members of that Government working together towards the unity of Angola and the reconciliation of the Angolan people. In fact, the Government will be an essential tool in facilitating the implementation of the remaining tasks of the peace process.

Being close to peace does not necessarily translate into a consolidated peace. We must not deceive ourselves: peace and prosperity are now within reach of all Angolans, but they cannot yet be taken for granted. The remains of the past still persist in Angola, and it is crucial to learn from mistakes. Therefore, the message we must now send to all Angolans, and in particular to those who have subscribed to the peace agreements, is a very simple one: they must believe in the peace process and act accordingly, with an open heart, an open mind, and without any misgivings.

In this context, a meeting within the territory of Angola between President José Eduardo dos Santos and Mr. Jonas Savimbi would show the international community that the political situation in that country is really changing for the better. We hope that the recent approval by the National Assembly of the special status of Mr. Savimbi will facilitate that long-awaited meeting.

Other vitally important steps include the completion of the remaining military aspects of the peace process, including the selection and incorporation of UNITA soldiers into the Angolan Armed Forces and demobilization, and the extension of State administration throughout the national territory. Portugal urges the Government and UNITA to complete those tasks expeditiously. They must go that extra mile for peace. We want to believe that such steps will be taken, but the Security Council will have to remain actively seized of the matter to ensure that they are.

Portugal considers national reconciliation to mean not only national unity, but national unity in a democracy. These targets must not be separated. A vibrant democracy is a precondition for peace and stability, and these elements will enable the international community to assist the economic rehabilitation of Angola.

Peace, prosperity and democracy are the separate threads that will unite Angola in a joint destiny. My country is ready to maintain its assistance programmes in the political, social, economic and humanitarian fields, so long as they result from the will of the Angolan Government. For the same reasons, we also welcome the United Nations consolidated inter-agency appeal for Angola, covering the period from January to December 1997. My delegation also associates itself with the statement made earlier by the European Union, stressing its willingness to cooperate actively in the reconstruction of a reconciled Angola.

Looking ahead, the Portuguese Government fully agrees with the recommendation of the Secretary-General that the Council approve the extension of UNAVEM's

mandate until 30 June 1997, on the understanding that the operation would proceed gradually towards an observer mission which would focus basically on political, humanitarian and human rights aspects. We also share his view that the international community should remain engaged in Angola until the goal of the full implementation of the Lusaka Protocol is achieved.

Allow me also to underline the importance of the recent visit of the Secretary-General to Angola, which injected new vigour into the process, strengthening the remarkable efforts made by his Special Representative, Maître Beye, supported by the observer countries. The results of his visit are evident.

Portugal has consistently argued, in international forums and in its bilateral contacts, against direct and indirect military intervention in Angola. Respect for the sovereignty of States is a cardinal principle of Portuguese foreign policy. The Angolan people paid a very heavy toll for these interventions. Therefore, we call upon the Angolans to proceed in such a way as to contribute always to regional peace and stability.

Before concluding, I must state the obvious: the present situation in Angola offers the Angolan people the prospect of a fresh start; but it also constitutes a new challenge to its collective will and determination. Recent events have shown that the seeds of peace which were sown with the agreements signed in Lisbon and by the Lusaka Protocol will finally bear fruit.

I now resume my functions as President of the Security Council.

The representative of Angola has asked to speak. I now call on him.

Mr. Van Dunem "Mbinda" (Angola): I will be very brief. My delegation begs your indulgence, Mr. President, to speak again because there is some speculation regarding the alleged official involvement of the Angolan Government in the Zaire conflict. Some members of this Council this morning, and others this afternoon, mentioned the question of Zaire. That is why we feel compelled to provide clarification to this body.

From the very beginning of the civil unrest in Zaire, the Angolan Government pleaded for its rapid resolution and appealed very strongly to the parties involved to choose the negotiating table as a means to settle their differences. We also wish to state that this is an internal matter and it is up to the Zairians themselves to find the appropriate solution in order to restore peace and security without any external interference.

Angola has a long record of joining all efforts carried out regionally in order to resolve and prevent conflicts on our continent due to their disastrous consequences for the stability of countries and the well-being of other peoples.

As is well known — and this Council shares these views — the involvement and contributions of the Angolan Government in Sao Tome and Principe have helped restore the interrupted democracy and the State machinery. We have never been involved in any way whatsoever in other countries' internal affairs.

Therefore, we strongly oppose and reject the latest reports suggesting Angola's interference in the internal affairs of Zaire. We would also like to remind this body that there were well-known border-crossing activities before July and August 1975, including the naked intervention of the Zairian Government alongside the National Front for the Liberation of Angola (FMLA), to prevent the proclamation of independence of Angola. Everyone also knows of the Zairian Government's support for UNITA to fight against the Government of Angola ever since Angola became independent, and everyone knows of the resolutions of this body asking for non-interference by Zaire in Angolan internal affairs. This Council has the sustainable proof of this blatant interference.

The Government of Angola does not think that this is the time to raise these questions about the Zairian civil conflict, because the Council is seized of the Angolan peace process, in which everyone — international public opinion and the Angolan people in particular — is congratulating himself on the victory achieved up to now. We ask the Council to stick to the Angolan question and leave the question of Zaire, as it is an internal conflict of that country.

The President: It is my understanding that the Security Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution (S/1997/316) before it. Unless I hear any objection, I shall put the draft resolution to the vote now.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

Chile, China, Costa Rica, Egypt, France, Guinea-Bissau, Japan, Kenya, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, Sweden, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America

The President: There were 15 votes in favour. The draft resolution has been adopted unanimously as resolution 1106 (1997).

The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The Security Council will remain seized of the matter.

The meeting rose at 5.25 p.m.